

The Jesus Secret

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Second Edition

by
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Section I:

The Koine Greek Discovery

Chapter 1 – A Most Incredible Discovery

Most people are unaware that the translators of the first English Bibles guessed what many of the Greek words meant. They had to guess, for the first English Bibles were translated at a time when scholars didn't know the language they were translating ever even existed.

For a long time Koine Greek confused many scholars because it was significantly different from Classical Greek. Some hypothesized that it was a combination of Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic. Others attempted to explain it as a “Holy Ghost language,” meaning that God created a special language just for the Bible.¹

For centuries scholars had never come across any document that was written in the same type of Greek as the Bible, so they assumed the Bible was written in a special language, a language made specifically and only for the Bible itself. *And the first English Bibles were translated by scholars who didn't know the language they were translating ever even existed.*

Talk about a total information vacuum. And since the scholars didn't know the biblical language, they had to guess the meanings of many important words. Of course, they took the best guesses they could. But given their complete unawareness of the prior existence of the language itself, their translation was ultimately based on many shot-in-the-dark guesses—nothing more, nothing less.

But studies of Greek papyri found in Egypt over the last one hundred years have shown that Koine Greek was the language everyday people used in the writing of wills, letters, receipts, shopping lists, etc.²

¹ *Greek for the Rest of Us*, William Mounce, p. 3

² *Greek for the Rest of Us*, William Mounce, p. 3

But with the dawning of the twentieth century everything was about to change. At the turn of this century archaeologists discovered so many original early Greek manuscripts that the mass of material was measured in the tons when it was shipped to London for analysis. Almost overnight, the world went from having none to literally having tons of original early Greek manuscripts. And it wasn't long before archaeologists realized one of the biggest historical surprises—these manuscripts were written using the same vocabulary, grammar and style as the Bible itself. Archaeologists discovered the Bible wasn't written in a special language after all; it was written in the native tongue of the common man. It was written in Koine Greek.

The discovery of the Koine Greek language caused a large rift to form in biblical scholarship circles. On one side were the scholars who were thrilled at the opportunity to examine the biblical texts afresh, with tons of new information to guide them in discovering teachings that might have been lost for almost two thousand years. On the other side were the traditionalists, who feared the possibility that the new material might show the church had embraced centuries of error because of poorly translated versions of the Bible.

Traditionalists have made every effort to downplay the significance of this monumental discovery, for when the wrongly guessed meanings are replaced with the actual meanings of the words, the Bible shows itself to be an entirely different document. The biblical passages come alive in surprising ways as they reveal the original Christian teachings, teachings which had been buried along with the language for almost two thousand years.

For example, the King James Bible has a rather strange reference to *evil* fruit. Fruit cannot murder. It is unable to rape. It doesn't molest children. Fruit cannot be *evil*. But if we restore the common Koine Greek meaning of the word, this passage is breathed new life, and it reveals an incredible biblical teaching that had been lost for almost two thousand years.

And consider 1 Corinthians 6:6-9. Modern English translations make it seem that Paul told the Corinthians to not bring lawsuits against each other because *the wicked* won't inherit the kingdom of God. Was the bringing of lawsuits really *wicked*, or did Paul possibly

say something else will prevent them from inheriting the kingdom of God, something specifically related to the lawsuits themselves? If we restore the common Koine Greek meaning of the word, this passage is given new life, and it also reveals another biblical teaching that had been lost for almost two thousand years.

Let's consider one more verse. According to modern translations Jesus's disciple John supposedly wrote, "All *unrighteousness* is sin, and there is sin that does not lead to death." In English, the word *unrighteousness* is itself a synonym for sin. To the modern reader, the passage sounds like John is saying, "All sin is sin, and there is sin that doesn't lead to death"—a very confusing sentence to say the least. However, if we restore the common Koine Greek meaning of the word the passage takes on new life. And it reveals still another teaching that had been lost for almost two thousand years.

Word after word, sentence after sentence, passage after passage, biblical scholars analyzed the Bible in light of the actual meanings of the Koine Greek words. During the process a large number of lost teachings were unveiled. The Bible has shown itself to be an entirely different document than was previously believed.

Those who are avid readers of modern Bibles are likely going to be unsettled by the sudden shifts in learning that the archaeological discoveries are bringing with them. But for those who are curious to discover the teachings of the original Christian Bible, teachings buried for almost two thousand years, welcome.